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ARA/AND/CH:RSDRISCOLL

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P R 032151Z NOV 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

STATE 270885

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, AR

SUBJECT: CONGRESSMAN FRASER'S INTEREST IN POLITICAL
PRISONERS IN ARGENTINA

1. CONGRESSMAN FRASER HAS WRITTEN TO DEPARTMENT REQUESTING
INFORMATION ON ERNESTO BENADO, LUIS ITURRIAGA CASALI,
URUGUAYAN SENATOR ERRO AND NAMBA VILLAGRA.

2. ACCORDING TO FRASER, CHILEAN ERNESTO BENADO WAS
ARRESTED TEN MONTHS AGO AND IS BEING HELD WITHOUT CHARGES.
BUENOS AIRES 3234 REPORTED THAT BENADO WAS ASSOCIATED WITH
CHILEAN EXTREME LEFT AND WAS PROBABLY A MEMBER OF MIR.
CAN THE EMBASSY REPORT ANYTHING FURTHER ON BENADO CASE?

3. CHILEAN LABOR LEADER LUIS ITURRIAGA CASALI WAS
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REPORTEDLY ARRESTED ON SEPTEMBER 10. BUENOS AIRES 6280 REPORTED THAT EMBASSY HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON HIS ALLEGED ARREST BUT HAD INQUIRED ABOUT HIM INFORMALLY AT FOREIGN MINISTRY. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS?

4. MONTEVIDEO'S 4156 AND BUENOS AIRES 7189 HAVE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON SENATOR ERRO.

5. DEPARTMENT DOES NOT KNOW WHO NAMBA VILLAGRA IS. SHE WAS REPORTEDLY ARRESTED IN BUENOS AIRES WITH HER BABY ON JUNE 3; BABY WAS RELEASED SUBSEQUENTLY. WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT VILLAGRA IF POSSIBLE.

6. FRASER LETTER CONCLUDES: "I HOPE THAT OUR EMBASSY AND THE DEPARTMENT HAS MADE IT CLEAR TO ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES THAT THESE KIDNAPPINGS, DETENTIONS WITHOUT TRIAL AND FREQUENT REPORTS OF TORTURE IS SERIOUSLY ERODING THE GOOD WILL BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE." THE DEPARTMENT WILL ADVISE FRASER THAT BOTH THE EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT HAVE MADE ARGENTINE OFFICIALS AWARE THAT POLITICAL VIOLENCE IS CAUSING SERIOUS CRITICISM OF ARGENTINA BY U.S. CONGRESS, PRESS AND PUBLIC. KISSINGER

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